

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 DUBLIN 00276 111651Z

51

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SUBJ: IRA CEASEFIRE WELCOMED IN DUBLIN

REF: DUBLIN 270

1. FORMAL STATEMENTS WERE ISSUED FEBRUARY 10 BY BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION WELCOMING IRA CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCED FEB 9. MINISTER FOR POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS O'BRIEN IN STATEMENT ISSUED ON BEHALF OF GOVERNMENT SAID THAT GOVERNMENT WELCOMED NEWS OF SUSPENSION OF HOSTILITIES AND HOPED IT WOULD DEVELOP INTO PERMANENT CESSATION OF VIOLENCE. HE ADDED THAT IRISH CABINET WILL CONSIDER CEASEFIRE ON AFTERNOON FEB 11 AT WHICH TIME IT WILL ALSO CONSIDER REPORT BY MINISTER FOR JUSTICE COONEY ON PORTLAOISE HUNGER YTRIKES. OPPOSITION LEADER LYNCH IN FORMAL STATEMENT WELCOMED CEASEFIRE AND SAID HE HOPED IT WILL ENABLE INITIATIVES TO BE TAKEN THAT WILL LEAD TO CONDITIONS IN WHICH CONVENTION ELECTIONS CAN TAKE PLACE WITHOUT POLARIZED POSITIONS DEVELOPING. HE WENT ON TO EXPRESS HOPE THAT IRISH AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SITUATION TO PRESS FORWARD WITH PROPOSALS FOR CROSS-BORDER ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

2. MR. SEAMUS LOUGHRAN OF NORTHERN IRELAND PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN IN A T.V. INTERVIEW EVENING FEBRUARY 10 SAID HE SAW NO REASON WHY UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 DUBLIN 00276 111651Z

CEASEFIRE SHOULD NOT LAST SINCE IT WAS OPENHANDED. LOUGHRAN

EMPHASIZED THAT THE THREE KEY PHRASES IN THE IRISH REPUBLICAN BUREAU'S STATEMENT ANNOUNCING "THE SUSPENSION OF OFFENSIVE MILITARY ACTION" WERE "EFFECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS", THE WORD "TRUCE" RATHER THAN CEASEFIRE AND FACT THAT THERE WAS A DATE FOR STARTING THE TRUCE - FROM 6 P.M. MONDAY - BUT NO DATE FOR ENDING IT. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE WAS NO WAR AS FAR AS PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN WERE CONCERNED FROM 6 P.M. MONDAY ALTHOUGH NATURALLY IRA WOULD RESERVE RIGHT TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND THEIR WEAPONS. HE SAID THERE SHOULD BE IMMEDIATE VISIBLE SIGNS OF DE-ESCALATION - REDUCTION OF BRITISH ARMY PRESENCE, RELEASES OF DETAINEES, AND FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH POLITICAL WING OF THE MOVEMENT, SINN FEIN. LOUGHRAN SAID HE THOUGHT THERE SEEMED TO BE THE WILL TO RECIPROCATE, TO FIND SOME JUST SOLUTION AND UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES "ONE COULD BE VERY OPTIMISTIC AND SAY THAT IT AUGURED VERY WELL FOR THE FUTURE."

3. DUBLIN PRESS GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO REPORTED BRITISH ACTION IN RESPONSE TO CEASEFIRE, INCLUDING EXPECTATION THAT SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF REPUBLICAN DETAINEES AT LONG KESH WILL BE RELEASED WITHIN NEXT THREE DAYS. IT WAS ALSO EXPECTED THAT LEVEL OF BRITISH ARMY ACTIVITY WILL BE REDUCED IMMEDIATELY. PRESS REPORTED ON SECURITY MEETING FEB 10 AT STORMONT WHICH COVERED "EFFECTIVE MEASURES WHICH WOULD ENSURE THAT CEASEFIRE WOULD NOT BREAKDOWN." THESE MEASURES REPORTEDLY INCLUDE ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMMEDIATE CONTACT BETWEEN PROVOS AND STORMONT CASTLE IN EVENT OF ANY INCIDENT THREATENING CEASEFIRE.

4. ARTICLE IN FEB 11 IRISH TIMES REPORTED THAT GOVERNMENT SOURCES IN DUBLIN ATTRIBUTED SUSPENSION OF HOSTILITIES TO CHANGE IN TACTICS ON PART OF PROVISIONAL IRA IN ATTEMPT TO REGAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT. SOURCES ALSO QUOTED AS SAYING ONLY POLITICAL CONCESSION OF VALUE WHICH THE BRITISH COULD MAKE WOULD BE DECLARATION OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW COMPLETELY, BUT THIS COULD NOT BE EXPECTED. GOVERNMENT MINISTERS REPORTED AS ONLY MODERATELY HOPEFUL OF PROLONGED PERIOD OF PEACE BUT NOT HOPEFUL AT ALL OF POLITICAL PROGRESS. THEY FEEL PEACE IS ENDANGERED BY SECTARIAN MURDERS AND RETAILIATION. LENGTHY SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE COUPLED WITH PHASING OUT OF DETENTION COULD IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR THE CONVENTION ELECTION, BUT THESE GOVERNMENT SOURCES REPORTEDLY DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS ANY REAL LIKELIHOOD OF

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PAGE 03 DUBLIN 00276 111651Z

AGREEMENT IN THE CONVENTION.
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